

**COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
AGENDA ITEM TRANSMITTAL**

(1) DEPARTMENT Planning and Building	(2) MEETING DATE 9/18/2012	(3) CONTACT/PHONE Airlin M. Singewald, Planner III / (805) 781-5198	
(4) SUBJECT Resolution supporting a proposal by the Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County to use funds from the California Farmland Conservancy Program to purchase an agricultural conservation easement on the Highland Ranch. Supervisorial District 2.			
(5) RECOMMENDED ACTION Adopt the attached resolution supporting a proposal by the Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County to use funds from the California Farmland Conservancy Program to purchase an agricultural conservation easement on the Highland Ranch.			
(6) FUNDING SOURCE(S) N/A	(7) CURRENT YEAR FINANCIAL IMPACT \$0.00	(8) ANNUAL FINANCIAL IMPACT \$0.00	(9) BUDGETED? N/A
(10) AGENDA PLACEMENT { } Consent    { } Presentation    { X } Hearing (Time Est. <u>10 min.</u> )    { } Board Business (Time Est. _____)			
(11) EXECUTED DOCUMENTS { X } Resolutions    { } Contracts    { } Ordinances    { } N/A			
(12) OUTLINE AGREEMENT REQUISITION NUMBER (OAR) N/A		(13) BUDGET ADJUSTMENT REQUIRED? BAR ID Number: { } 4/5th's Vote Required    { X } N/A	
(14) LOCATION MAP  Attached	(15) BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT?  No	(16) AGENDA ITEM HISTORY { X } N/A    Date _____	
(17) ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE REVIEW			
(18) SUPERVISOR DISTRICT(S) District 2			

# County of San Luis Obispo



TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Planning and Building / Airlin M. Singewald, Planner III

VIA: Kami Griffin, Assistant Director, Department of Planning and Building

DATE: 9/18/2012

SUBJECT: Resolution supporting a proposal by the Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County to use funds from the California Farmland Conservancy Program to purchase an agricultural conservation easement on the Highland Ranch.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Adopt the attached resolution supporting a proposal by the Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County to use funds from the California Farmland Conservancy Program to purchase an agricultural conservation easement on the Highland Ranch.

## **DISCUSSION**

The Warden family and the Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County are working together to conserve in perpetuity the agricultural, scenic, and open space resources of the Highland Ranch, located at 7515 Los Osos Valley Road, about two miles northwest of San Luis Obispo. The Highland Ranch has been a working cattle ranch and farm for 140 years. It is one of the few continuous operating ranches that have remained in the same family for that long.

The ranch would be preserved through the voluntary purchase of two separate conservation easements. One easement, funded through the State Department of Conservation's Farmland Conservancy Program, would protect the ranch's 240 acres of farmland on the Los Osos valley floor. The second easement would protect the rangeland, open space, scenic, and watershed values of the property's remaining 292 acres.



**Warden Ranch – 1901**

**Photo from San Luis Obispo Area Plan**

Your Board's adoption of the attached resolution, expressing the County's support for the easement, is the final step necessary before the Land Conservancy can draw funds from the state and complete the transaction.

The agricultural conservation easement would prohibit future subdivisions of the property and would restrict development away from prime farmland and environmentally sensitive areas. The specific provisions and restrictions of the easements are summarized in the attached memo from the Land Conservancy.

The Warden family has applied for a lot line adjustment that will help facilitate this transaction by creating a separate 240 acre parcel that is eligible for protection under the Farmland Conservancy Program. The lot line adjustment is scheduled for a Planning Department hearing on September 7, 2012. This staff report was required to be submitted prior to that date; however staff can report the outcome during the Board hearing.

It is important to note that the conservation agreement is a private transaction whereby the Land Conservancy would purchase two easements from the Warden family. This transaction is facilitated by, but is not a requirement or condition of, the pending lot line adjustment.

#### **OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT/IMPACT**

County Counsel reviewed and approved the resolution as to form and legal effect. The County Agricultural Commissioner's Office and the City of San Luis Obispo have written letters in support of the easements.

#### **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Not applicable.

#### **RESULTS**

Adoption of the attached resolution will allow the Land Conservancy to draw funds from the state and complete the transaction to permanently conserve the Highland Ranch.

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

- Attachment 1: Resolution Supporting the Easement Proposal to the California Department of Conservation's California Farmland Conservancy Program for the Highland Ranch Conservation Easement Project
- Attachment 2: Land Conservancy memo; August 6, 2012
- Attachment 3: Agricultural Commissioner and City of SLO letters of support
- Attachment 4: Vicinity, Aerial, and Easement Location Maps